



NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the first Scottish Building Standards Hub (SBSH) newsletter for LABSS members and wider stakeholders

This bulletin contains information related to actions discussed at the LABSS Consortium Technical Working Group (CTWG) meeting on the 18th February 2026. It also provides an update on recent discussions and current enquiries being received by the SBSH.

Information Papers

Recently published information papers include [INFOP43](#) on cladding remediation and [INFOP44](#) on SAP 10, with a verifier checklist due soon.

Work on timber cladding and Mandatory Standard 2.7 information paper continues, with updates to follow after Easter reflecting new Wood Protection Association (WPA) guidance. Reviewing certification for fire and smoke dampers remains under consideration, while case studies on Temporary Demountable Structures are nearing completion.

The updated External Wall Insulation (EWI) Applications Information Paper is ready pending final structural peer review. An updated electrical competency self-assessment form has been circulated to CTWG representatives, and new draft papers on cills and handrails are currently being drafted.

Structural Hub

Development Work

Key actions underway include creating best-practice guidance for procuring structural engineering services, establishing a collaborative forum similar to the Fire Hub, and exploring verifier training on topics such as engaging with third-party engineers, load paths, common defects, on-site structural checks, and links to SUDS-related engineering issues.



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Dispute Resolution

LABSS members links to recently concluded cases noted below:

[26/25/CTWG/DRC/FAL Mandatory Standard 2.15 Fire protection to automatic fire suppression](#)

[27/25/CTWG/DRC/FIFE Mandatory Standard 4.3 and width for an external stair within a rear garden](#)

Following a recent enquiry, additional text has been added to the website, and updates to the application form and guidance notes are underway. The enquiry highlighted concerns that a verifier might decline a dispute resolution request due to a similar previous case. To clarify this, proposed wording emphasises that while past DRP outcomes can offer useful insight, each case is always considered on its own merits to ensure fairness and accuracy.

Fire Hub

- ◆ **Misting Systems:** The SBSH continues to receive enquiries on misting systems, particularly regarding testing limitations (room size/ceiling height) and nozzle testing to BS 8663.

[LABSS members Guidance](#) is available on the SBSH website for situations where no BS 8663 3rd party testing certification is available, this may be useful for verifiers when considering such matters. Further support from the SBSH can be provided upon request.

It is also noted that BS 8458 has now been withdrawn and replaced by BS EN 14972-17:2025, although the Technical Handbooks still reference BS 8458. Either standard may be used, but the UK National Annex to BS EN 14972-1 still calls up BS 8663 for nozzle testing, so this should continue to be requested or supported with suitable alternative evidence.

- ◆ **Structural Timber Association Pattern Book update:** refer to recent [SBSH news article](#)
- ◆ **Maturation Warehouses:** SBSH is forming a cross-sector group (Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), Building Standards Division (BSD), Scottish Whisky Association (SWA), and industry reps) to support consistent assessment of modern maturation warehouse designs, focusing on compartmentation, life-safety systems, and access/egress. Supplementary guidance is planned.
- ◆ **Operational Partnership Support:** Remains available to verifiers as required.
- ◆ **Fire Hub National Collaborative Forum:** Two meetings held; the third is scheduled for 26 March. Notes are available on the [SBSH website](#).



Continuous Professional Development (CPD) / Learning Material

Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Modules

- Standard 3.28 (overheating – simplified method) module now live.
- Ventilation and distance-to-boundary modules (Std 2.6 – domestic & non-domestic) coming soon.
- Non-domestic escape (2.9) and induction modules expected in 6-8 weeks.
- Fire-fighting facilities module in production, due in 8-12 weeks.

Learning Management System (LMS), Learning Experience Platform (LXP) & Skills Builder

- LXP now operating as a business as usual (BAU) self-service learning platform.
- Future enhancements planned for late 2026 to give managers more control over team development.
- Skills Builder is fully operational and supporting CAS completion in peer review.

Upcoming CPD topics:

- ◆ Water byelaws
- ◆ April 2026 Technical Handbooks
- ◆ Thermal-radiation analysis (Std 2.6 alternative approach)
- ◆ Electrical certification

Training Opportunities

Note-of-interest forms issued for:

- ◆ LABC Level 6 Fire Engineering Course
- ◆ Level 6 Manager Course (for current and aspiring managers)
- ◆ BE-ST Low Carbon Passport Training

- * **Electricity network provider substation enquiry**

Network provider contacted the SBSH for advice on the Building Warrant process and raised potential challenges around compliance for substation buildings. The members of the SBSH technical team have provided guidance and will continue supporting network provider as needed.

- * **Cost Recovery Report**

A benchmarking report was completed by SBSH on 26 January in response to a local authority request regarding cost recovery under Sections 28–30 of the Building (Scotland) Act 2003. National guidance, informed by the report's recommendations, is progressing and expected by the end of March.

- * **Garden Rooms**

CTWG feedback indicates that these structures should generally be treated as conservatories when attached to dwellings, meaning a building warrant is normally required as they do not meet the exemption criteria set out under Type 18 of Schedule 1 in Regulation 3. Some detached or open-sided variants may fall within the Type 19 exemption. Key compliance considerations include structure, moisture protection, energy performance and, where applicable, fire safety. Each case should be assessed individually at the verifier's discretion.

- * **Completion certificate where no warrant obtained - consultation process**

The Building (Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2004 confirms that Late Completion Certificates (LCCs) are not governed by the consultation requirements in Section 10 or 11, these sections being located in Part II of the regulations which specifically cover an application for building warrant.

However, Section 18(3) of the Building (Scotland) Act 2003 and Section 43 of the Building (Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2004 sets out how verifiers must handle consultation when assessing completion certificates. Section 18(3) of the Act requires consultation where specified and Section 43 of the Procedures regulations specifies consultation with the fire authority if that would have been required under Section 11.

Where a Late Completion Certificate relates to a building or work that falls within the mandatory consultation categories of Section 11, consultation with SFRS is required. This ensures that unauthorised works do not receive a lower standard of scrutiny than compliant warrant applications and aligns with the statutory expectation that the verifier must undertake sufficient inquiry to be satisfied that the building meets the fire safety requirements of the building regulations. In cases where the building would not have triggered mandatory consultation under Regulation 11, informal discussion may still be appropriate where fire safety concerns arise.

These principles are outlined within Section 14.2.3 of the Procedural Handbook which notes 'Where a completion certificate is submitted for a building where no warrant has been granted, the verifier should consult with the SFRS on those projects where consultation would have occurred if a warrant had been applied for.

- * **New IStructE Guidance on RAAC in Scottish Residential Properties**

Two new guidance documents recently published by The Institution of Structural Engineers relating to reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) roof panel construction in Scottish residential property.

[Part 1](#) is aimed primarily at Structural Engineers and Chartered Surveyors. It supports those responsible for carrying out initial appraisals, visual surveys and early risk assessments of RAAC in flat roofs. The document outlines a three-stage process:

- Stage 1 - triage appraisal,
- Stage 2 - detailed assessment (including intrusive investigations), and
- Stage 3 - permanent solutions.

Part 1 also contains useful information relevant to Building Standards verifiers. It notes that structural designs should be undertaken by a structural engineering practice and certified by an SER certifier for Scottish Building Standards purposes (Section 2.0). Reference is also made to compliance with other standards, including headroom, ventilation, daylighting, thermal performance, barriers and escape window provision. An example survey drawing that may support a building warrant application is provided on page 22.

[Part 2](#) is intended for Structural Engineers responsible for carrying out detailed, case-by-case assessments of RAAC roof panel construction, applying professional judgement within a risk-based framework. This section focuses on permanent solutions, including structural timber or metal joists (Section 4.1) and diaphragm action (Section 4.4). Section 4.5 also addresses non-structural considerations relevant to Building Standards, including headroom, fire performance and condensation risk. Overall, it provides a structured, risk-based framework to support safe and compliant remediation. Pages 18-20 includes examples of remedial details that may support such an application.

Recent Enquiries

Cavity Widths for Timber Cladding

The SBSH have recently been approached for comment on the use of nominal cavity widths behind timber cladding solutions. The enquirer noted supporting test data indicating effective ventilation with cavities as small as 6 mm, while typical industry practice remains around 25 mm for horizontal and 63 mm for vertical cladding, SBSH advised that any reduced cavity proposal must be backed by robust evidence demonstrating effective moisture management and suit-ability for the specific wall build-up and exposure conditions. Discussions are ongoing.

Clarification on 'Always Useful' Heat Loss and Pipe Insulation Requirements

BSD has provided further clarification on the intent of Mandatory Standard 6.4 and the 'always useful' heat-loss concept in the Domestic Building Services Compliance Guide.

Heat loss from pipework is only acceptable where it directly contributes to heating the space and reduces demand on the emitter. BSD has confirmed that no heat loss should occur within cavities or service voids, as this prevents heat reaching the room efficiently and can cause issues such as boiler cycling and low flow temperatures.

The SBSH can provide further advice in this respect where required.

Heat Interface Units (HIU)

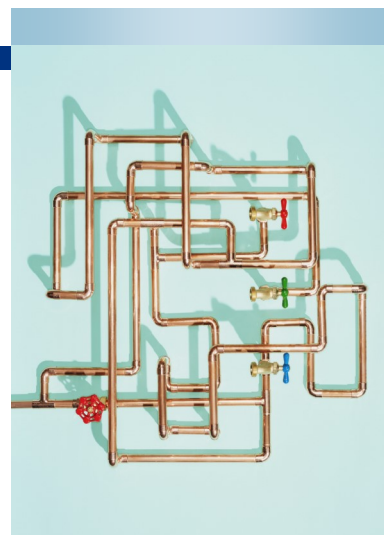
The SBSH recently received an enquiry related to whether heat interface units are considered as unvented hot water systems applicable to Mandatory Standard 4.9. The key conclusion being 'because HIUs do not store hot water, they do not fall neatly into the category of "unvented hot water storage systems" as defined in Standard 4.9.'

Full reply to enquiry noted below:

Because HIUs do not store hot water, they do not fall neatly into the category of "unvented hot water storage systems" as defined in Standard 4.9. That said, manufacturer installation guides indicate that HIUs should incorporate several key safety features, including:

- ◆ Over-pressure safety relief valve: A WRAS-approved valve rated to 3 bar to protect against excessive pressure
- ◆ Low-pressure protection: A switch to stop the circulating pump if pressure drops below 0.7 bar
- ◆ Automatic bypass valve: To maintain minimum flow rate and regulate pressure
- ◆ Expansion vessel: Correctly sized and installed between the HIU and any isolation valve
- ◆ Filling loop and pressure gauge: To facilitate system top-up and pressure monitoring

While Standard 4.9 may not directly apply to HIUs in the same way it does to systems like unvented cylinders, it remains important to ensure that HIUs are installed and maintained in accordance with manufacturer guidance and best practice to ensure safety and compliance.



Energy and Environment



Off-Grid Buildings & SBEM

A case involving an off-grid facility powered primarily by PV-supported ground-source heat pump was reviewed. Despite limited solar resources, the system was accepted as a non-direct-emission solution, with the diesel generator deemed emergency backup only. Compliance with Section 6 was confirmed.

District & Communal Heating

Concerns were raised that communal ASHP systems struggle to meet SAP targets compared with individual ASHPs. The Hub outlined that communal system performance figures follow government methodology designed to support cost neutrality and allow flexibility in provider choice. This explains the requirement for PV in most communal configurations.

Overheating – Standard 3.28

A research contractor has been appointed by the BSD to gather verifier insights to strengthen guidance on overheating risk. The SBSH has issued a call for verifier participation, with both rural and urban authorities engaging.

Spiral Cellars

A valid STAS certification exists. When all conditions are met, no relaxation is required.



Scottish Type Approval Scheme (STAS)

Updates

[New STAS application form](#), with other documents under review.

[STAS flyers](#) have been created and are intended as a resource for to share with potential STAS customers. This should help disseminate information quickly and may reduce assessment times for verifiers on future applications.

Flyers have been split into [Domestic](#) and [Non-Domestic](#) versions to reflect differences in example checklists.

The [STAS Information Paper for Verifiers](#) has also now been published.

Recently Approved

One developer approved on 23 January, covering six affordable house types. STAS certificates are available on the SBSH website, with relevant plans and supporting information also on the website but limited to LABSS members.



For more information on any of the matters raised in this newsletter please email sbsh@fife.gov.uk. LABSS members can also refer to the note of the most recent [CTWG meeting](#).

If you are not a member of LABSS and wish to directly receive future SBSH newsletter's please email sbsh@fife.gov.uk

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